

House Republican Press Release

February 22, 2005
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Governor's Proposal Kicks Off State's 'Budget Season'



By State Representative John J. Ryan

If you watched any Connecticut TV news or saw a daily paper in the last two weeks, you cannot have missed the coverage of Governor's Rell's recent Budget Address to the General Assembly. We will assume that if you are reading this column, you saw at least the highlights of her proposals, so we will not proceed with a recap and will move directly to some discussion points.

- **KEEP IN MIND** that the Governor's budget proposal is only the start of this year's budget process; no matter what, the final budget that gets put into place will be at least somewhat, and possibly very, different from where Governor Rell started.
- **GOOD NEWS** for our transportation issues! As you heard, Governor Rell has taken huge steps in addressing what has to be done to solve the problems that threaten to cripple our region; real proposals, real timetables and real funding!
- **NO ONE LIKES** any tax increases, but considering the looming deficit, the Governor proposed increasing few taxes, and did not propose higher income taxes (remember who pays the most taxes to Hartford?) and held the line on spending increases, even proposing an income tax freeze at State colleges. In other words, most taxpayers are not significantly impacted.
- **BUT EXPECT** that Democrat legislative majority, grouching about wanting to spend more money on programs, to racket up rhetoric that 'the rich need to pay their fair share' (although of course, the highest earners already pay by far the largest share of taxes) and attempt to pass a "millionaire's tax," which, in fact, will be only a misleading label with tax increases starting at much lower income levels.
- **AND LOCAL EDITORIAL** boards seem to believe that the urgency of the transportation issues is self-evident, although the political reality is that much of the rest of the state (and the Legislature) has no interest in "Gold Coast problems."
- **OF COURSE, THE HONEYMOON** for Governor Rell is predictably over with the commencement of the budget process; note the partisan hyperbole put out by Lt. Governor Kevin Sullivan with his op-ed attempting to compare Rell's budget with what he perceived to be the bad features of prior Rowland budgets.

- FINALLY, it should be noted that while Governor Rell's 'approval rating' could have been expected to slip once the budget issue moved forward, at 74%, it remains extraordinarily high for a serving Governor!

As this year's legislative session moves along, will Governor Rell's standing and clout with the public be enough to withstand the large majorities that the Democrats have in both chambers in determining who will prevail on fiscal issues? Since these topics are of vital importance to lower Fairfield County, stay tuned!

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.